

## Lake Michigan Citizen's Fishery Advisory Committee

April 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Present: Katelyn Brolick, Dennis Eade, Jay Wesley, Edward Erdelac, Clark Allen, Mike Radcliffe, John Stegmeier, Greg, Frank Krist, Jim Fenner, Lawrence Atkin, Mark Tonello, Troy Van Gelderen, Paul Jensen, Denny Grinold, Ben Turschak, Eric Braden, Mike Ryan, Bill Winowiecki, Ed Blissick, Terry Short, Darren Kramer, George Freeman, Kendra Kozlauskos, Tom Andris, Gary Smith, Kevin Hughes, Jim Bos, Jim Schramm, Troy Zorn, Jim Bos, Eric Braden, Dan O'Keefe, Todd Grischke, Mike Pajtas, Mark Williams, Jeff Jolley, Greg, Bob Reider, Dave Clapp, Dave Caroffino, Ed Eisch, Nick Torsky, Scott Heintzleman, John Bauman, David Shaw, Tony Redjenovich, Mike Verhamme

### **Agenda:**

#### Terms of Reference and Elections:

- The committee has been discussing various updates to the Terms of Reference with the primary change to set up an election process for Chair and Vice-Chair.
- An electronic polling system was used for the nominations and elections.
- Denny Grinold remains as Chair and Bill Winowiecki is Vice-Chair
  - The Vice-Chair provides a succession plan and can fill in for chair if needed

#### Roster Changes:

- George Freeman will be primary, and Shane Ruboyaines will be alternate for Ludington Charter Boat Association
- Northwest Michigan Fishing Club expressed interest to join the committee to represent an area of the state that is lacking representation.
  - Mike Radcliffe will be primary with Tim Hossack as alternate
- Tony Radjenovich will also be added to represent the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources

#### 2000 Consent Decree Negotiations Update - Dave Caroffino

- Still operating under 2000 decree that was extended to June 2021
- Working through harvest limits for lake trout
- Ambitious that negotiations would be complete by June
- Reach out to Dave if you have any other questions

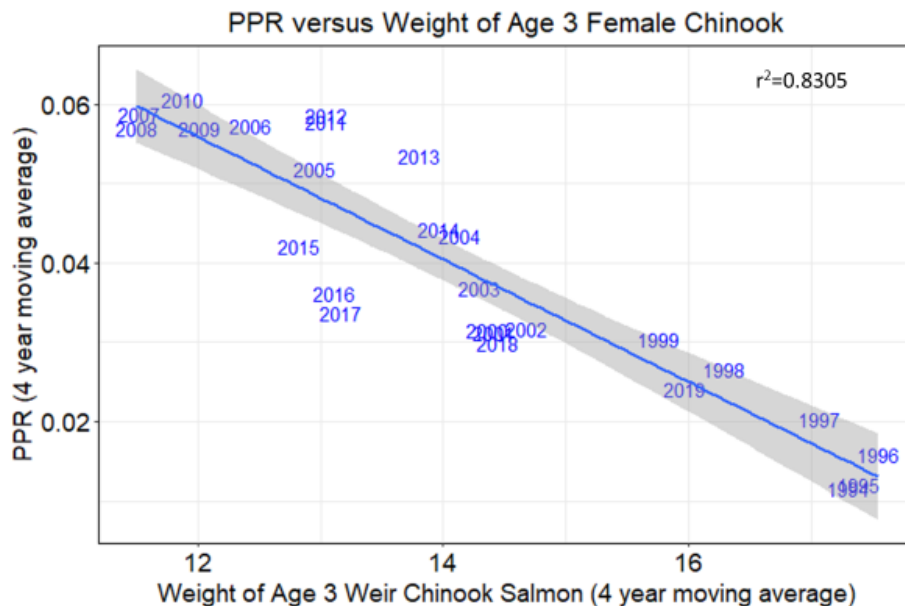
#### Lake Michigan Committee Meeting Reports

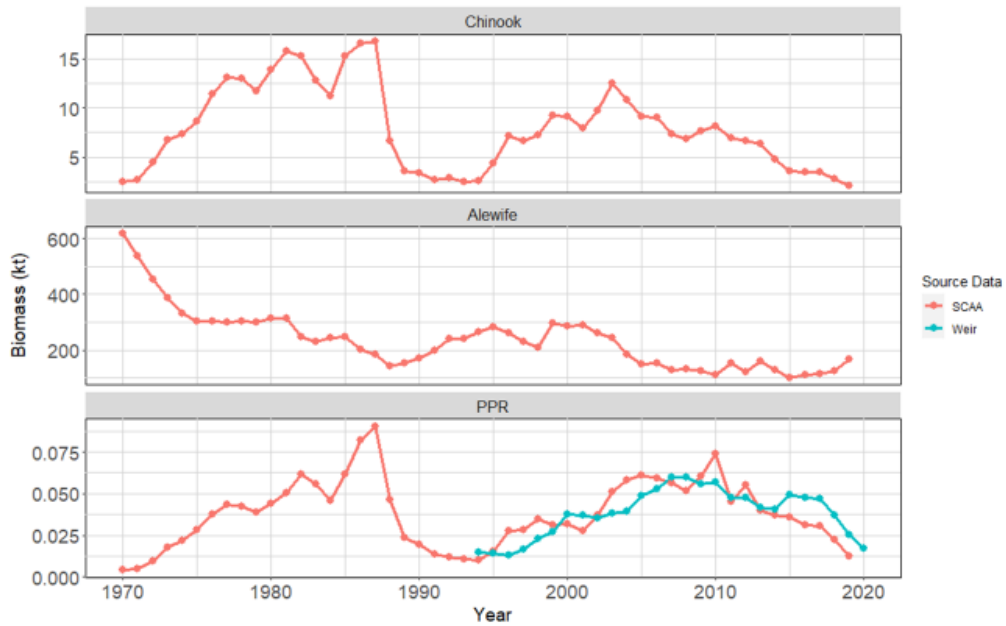
- Nutrients in the Great Lakes- phosphorus decline in Lake Michigan. Should we continue to push for control programs? [https://ijc.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/SAB-SPC\\_DecliningProductivityReport\\_2020.pdf](https://ijc.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/SAB-SPC_DecliningProductivityReport_2020.pdf)
  - With decreasing nutrients, the capacity of Lake Michigan to support fisheries also decreases.

- If time read through PDF – great report
- Since Clean Water Act there has been a decline and then mussel introduction helped this along.
- Several presentations on lake trout strains, nearshore fisheries, Predator Prey Ratio, Steelhead Microchemistry, telemetry of whitefish and walleye. These presentations are available: [Great Lakes Fishery Commission - 2021 Lake Committees Videos \(glfc.org\)](http://glfc.org)

The Relationship between Chinook Salmon Weir Weight and the Predator Prey Ratio (Ben Turschak)

- With a lack of data collection in 2020 due to pandemic, there was a need to gage where the predator prey ration might be even though the model could not be run.
  - No harvest or effort until June, No ages, No length or weight, Limited prey fish surveys, No hydroacoustic survey, Only 3 bottom trawl ports
- Ben Turschak and Jory Jonas worked on a relationship between Michigan Weir Chinook Salmon weights and the PPR and found a good relationship.
- 2020 average of 17 lbs- age 3
- At a high predator prey ratio not a lot of prey for predators – this happened around 2007/2008
- Can predict the predator prey for 2020 – produced estimate around 0.0125 kt
- In good shape for predator prey balance
- Will collect information for 2021
- Lake MI committee stocking policy
- Recall that we were at a record low stocking in 2017 and will stock 2.5 million Chinook lake-wide in 2021- up a million.

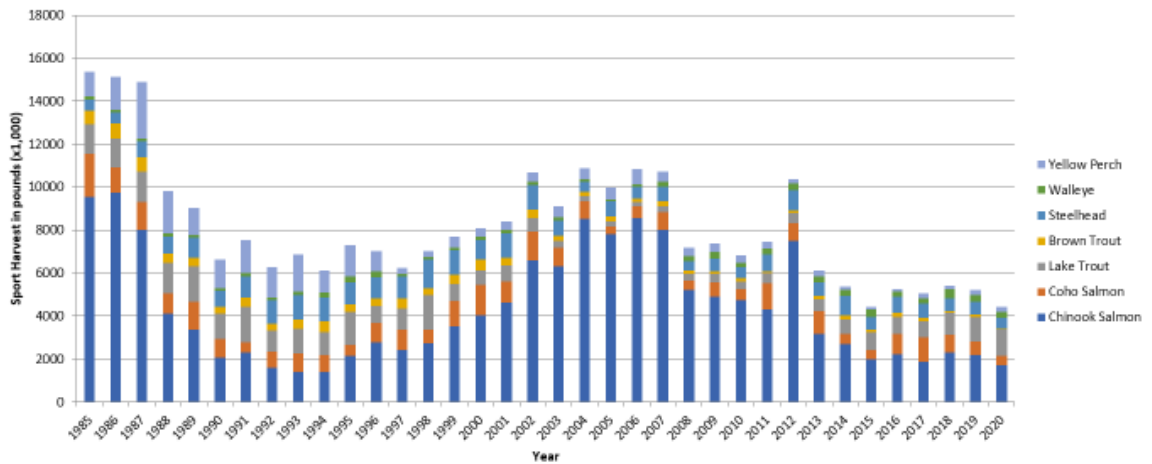




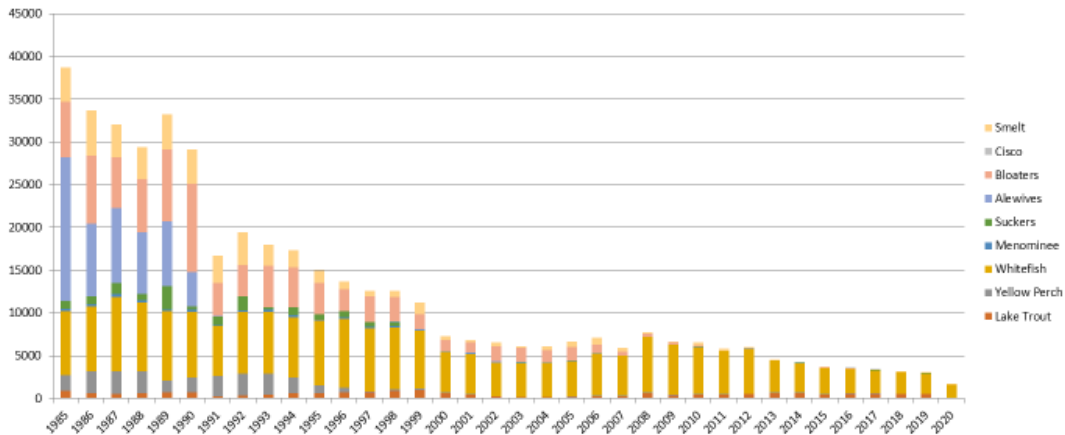
### Lake Michigan Management Updates

- Lake-wide harvest with all states combined continues to be lower with both recreational and commercial harvest as the productivity of the lake continues to decline.

## Lake-wide Harvest -Recreation



## Lake-Wide Harvest - Commercial



- Round goby research is using video images of the bottom of the lake to estimate goby densities by bottom type (sand, clay, rock). A test area at Good Harbor Reef estimated 7 million gobies in the reef area. It would be a great step forward with understanding total prey abundance to have good estimates of round goby.
- USGS only completed three bottom trawls and found low levels of alewife. They plan to use new technologies like upward pointing acoustics and sail drones to see if alewife are avoiding the research vessel.
- An extra 225,000 Chinook salmon (total 879,306) will be stocked in 2021 to make up for no steelhead. Also, 296,000 brown trout, 1.5 million coho salmon, and 2.1 million lake trout will be stocked in Michigan waters. Some lake trout will be stocked nearshore due to travel restrictions by USFWS.
- Here is the plan for Chinook salmon stocking:

Site	2013 - 2016 Stocking Level	Current Odd Years	Current Even Years	2021 Outside 1836
Escanaba	12,000	0	0	
Manistique*	34,000	0	130,000	
Medusa*	72,000	92,000	0	92,000
Boardman*	60,000	0	71,306	
Manistee River*	22,000	0	0	
Little Manistee River*	150,000	228,000	228,000	228,000
Big Sable River*	38,000	0	0	
Muskegon River*	18,000	75,000	0	75,000
Grand Haven	59,000	129,306	0	241,806
Holland	15,000	0	50,000	
Black River	15,000	0	75,000	
Saugatuck	16,000	0	100,000	
St. Joseph	48,000	130,000	0	242,500
Total	559,000	654,306	654,306	879,306

- Lake Michigan Stocking Plans for 2022
  - A subcommittee will be formed to make recommendations on 2022 stocking levels.
  - The Lake Michigan Committee has been notified that Michigan is interested in discussing stocking increases.
  - Great Lakes Salmon Initiative and Ludington Charter Boat Association have already shared ideas for stocking numbers and locations.
  - It will be important to develop criteria for numbers and locations. We need to stock enough (100,000 or greater) to increase survival and consider locations that contribute the most to the lake-wide fishery.
- Habitat Improvements: The Pucker Street Dam on the Dowagiac River is almost completely removed opening 150 miles of coldwater habitat. Removing quagga mussels from areas of Good Harbor Reef shows promising signs that the mussels will not recolonize with enough goby predation.
- Regulations Proposals
  - Field units will be holding conversation and coffee meeting to discuss various regulation proposals and changes.
  - Underwater Spear Fishing Proposal would allow for the take of lake trout, walleye, and northern pike while snorkeling in the Great Lakes.
  - Some groups are talking about an extra trolling license that would allow for an extra three rods on the Great Lakes. This would require a change in statute.
  - Guides and some anglers are concerned about the lower runs of steelhead and would like to see lower bag limits considered. The data gathering and discussions are on-going.
- New Cormorant Rule and permit system effective Feb 12, 2021
  - Draft permit application nearly complete to allow for harassment and take of cormorants
  - Region of 24 states 78,000 birds will be up for the taking
  - Quota could be around 10,000 birds for Michigan
  - Great Lakes Colony – reduce conflict (shooting/egg oiling) include:
    - Beaver Island
    - Little Bay and Big bays de Noc
    - Ludington Pumped Storage Facility
  - Non-lethal methods would be allowed to harass birds at fish stocking sites.

### DNR Updates

- Law Enforcement
  - Officers work on a variety of issues including wholesale markets, Invasive species inspections, recent moss ball issue containing zebra mussels, ghost nets, and general patrols.
  - Hiring 25 officers with prior certified officers that will go through a brief academy and new candidates that will go through the full academy.

- Please let LED know if you get entangled in a net. They would like to know GPS coordinates as soon as possible.
- Fish Disease control – cut/frozen bait that don't have a label or are not labeled correctly should be turned in or at least notify an officer. There should be documentation of the species and whether it has been disease tested on the label.
- LED could adjust and enforce an extra rod license for the Great Lakes.
- Hatcheries
  - Thompson State Fish Hatchery new pond construction almost complete.
  - Martha and Jan VanAmberg retired so Aaron Switzer will manage Wolf Lake, Harrietta, and Platte while Dan Sampson manages Oden, Marquette, and Thompson.
  - Walleye egg takes are done, and steelhead weir grates are in with 600 fish in ponds
- Field – low and clear water at Little Manistee River may be delaying the run there and in other rivers; brown trout catches from Ludington to Manistee have been good this year along with some steelhead, coho, and lake trout. Northern Lake Michigan had 19 people at their regulations meeting with some from downstate and one from Virginia; new creel clerk will be coming soon for Bays de Noc/Manistique.
- Research – Spring Lake Wide Assessment Plan surveys are starting; acoustic tag studies are underway for lake trout, whitefish, and cisco in Grand Traverse Bay area and in Northern Lake Michigan. If you catch a fish with a floy tag it more than likely has a tag and should be released. If fish is kept, contact Charlevoix Research station so that they can retrieve and re-deploy the tag. Similar work is going on for whitefish and walleye in Green Bay.

### Member Updates

- Care Act for Great Lakes Fisheries is approved – Thanks Dan O'Keefe and Sea Grant for your efforts
- Catching limits of lake trout throughout north and limits of yellow perch near Northport
- The Great Lakes Angler Diary is available to download app to record catch as well as clipped vs unclipped fish.
- Great Lake Salmon Initiative is gathering donations for another tag reward program
- MUCC working on Commercial Fishing Bill and resolutions are being developed for the convention with a proposal for a yellow perch spawning closure.
- Steelhead runs on the PM River are below average
- There seems to be three-year classes of brown trout being caught between Ludington and Manistee; some coho are around; with some lake trout – fewer than past years.
- Coho salmon were good early spring and are starting to head west from Indiana; St. Joseph River had a good run of steelhead.
- Respect given to the late Jim Vandermaas
- Lake trout fishing has been good to the north
- NW MI working on a pilot program with DNR and local businesses to put solar lights up at boat launches.

- Suggest meeting at Jay's for future in person meetings with a hybrid option for folks to attend virtually.

Next Meeting – TBD and probably late September or early October

Adjourn